



January 3, 2000

Mr. Duncan R. Fox  
Assistant Chief  
Legal Services  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
5805 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2000-0001

Dear Mr. Fox:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID#131004.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the “department”) received a request for information pertaining to the hiring process for a Driver License Examiner position. You state, with the exception of the department’s oral interview questions, all responsive information will be released to the requestor. You claim that the interview questions are excepted from disclosure under section 552.122(b) of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and have reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.122(b) excepts from disclosure test items developed by a licensing agency or governmental body. In Open Records Decision No. 626, this office determined that the term “test item” in section 552.122(b) includes any standard means by which an individual’s or group’s knowledge or ability in a particular area is evaluated, but does not encompass evaluations of an employee’s overall job performance or suitability. Whether information falls within the section 552.122(b) exception must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994).

After careful review, we conclude that the submitted questions are not “test items” as contemplated by section 552.122(b) because they do not involve “an evaluation of an applicant’s knowledge in a particular area.” Open Records Decision No. 626 (1994). Consequently, you must release the submitted information to the requestor.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

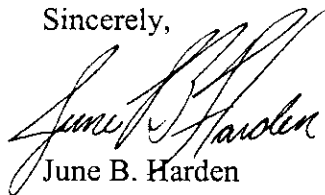
This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "June B. Harden", is written over a horizontal line.

June B. Harden  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

JBH/KSK/ch

Ref: ID#131004

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Ms. Marian Millo  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
6812 Broadway  
Galveston, Texas 77554  
(w/o enclosures)